

Association between vaginal progesterone use and risk of preterm birth among high-risk pregnancies: a real-world evidence study

Xi Wang, PhD; Djeneba Audrey Djibo, PhD; Cheryl N McMahill-Walraven, PhD

CVS Healthspire™ Life Sciences Solutions, CVS Health®, Blue Bell, PA

BACKGROUND

- **Preterm birth** is the leading cause of neonatal mortality.
 - In 2022, the preterm birth rate in the US was 10.4%, higher than the rate in most developed countries.¹
- **Injectable hydroxyprogesterone caproate** was approved by FDA to prevent preterm birth but has been withdrawn from the market since 2023.
 - As a result, there is currently no FDA-approved medication available for preterm birth prevention.
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) suggests that **vaginal progesterone** may be considered as an option for preterm prevention.²
 - Previous randomized control trials (RCTs) have found **conflicting** results on the efficacy of vaginal progesterone in preterm birth prevention.³

OBJECTIVE

- To evaluate the association between receipt of vaginal progesterone during pregnancy and the risk of preterm birth among pregnancies at high risk for preterm birth, using real-world data.

METHODS - DATA SOURCE

- This study used administrative commercial health claims data from a large national payor.
 - The payor covers individuals in the 50 US states, the District of Columbia, and US territories.
 - **The Sentinel Common Data Model (SCDM)** was used in this study to capture longitudinal information on enrollment dates, demographic characteristics, dispensed prescriptions, inpatient and outpatient diagnoses, treatments and procedures of commercially insured members.

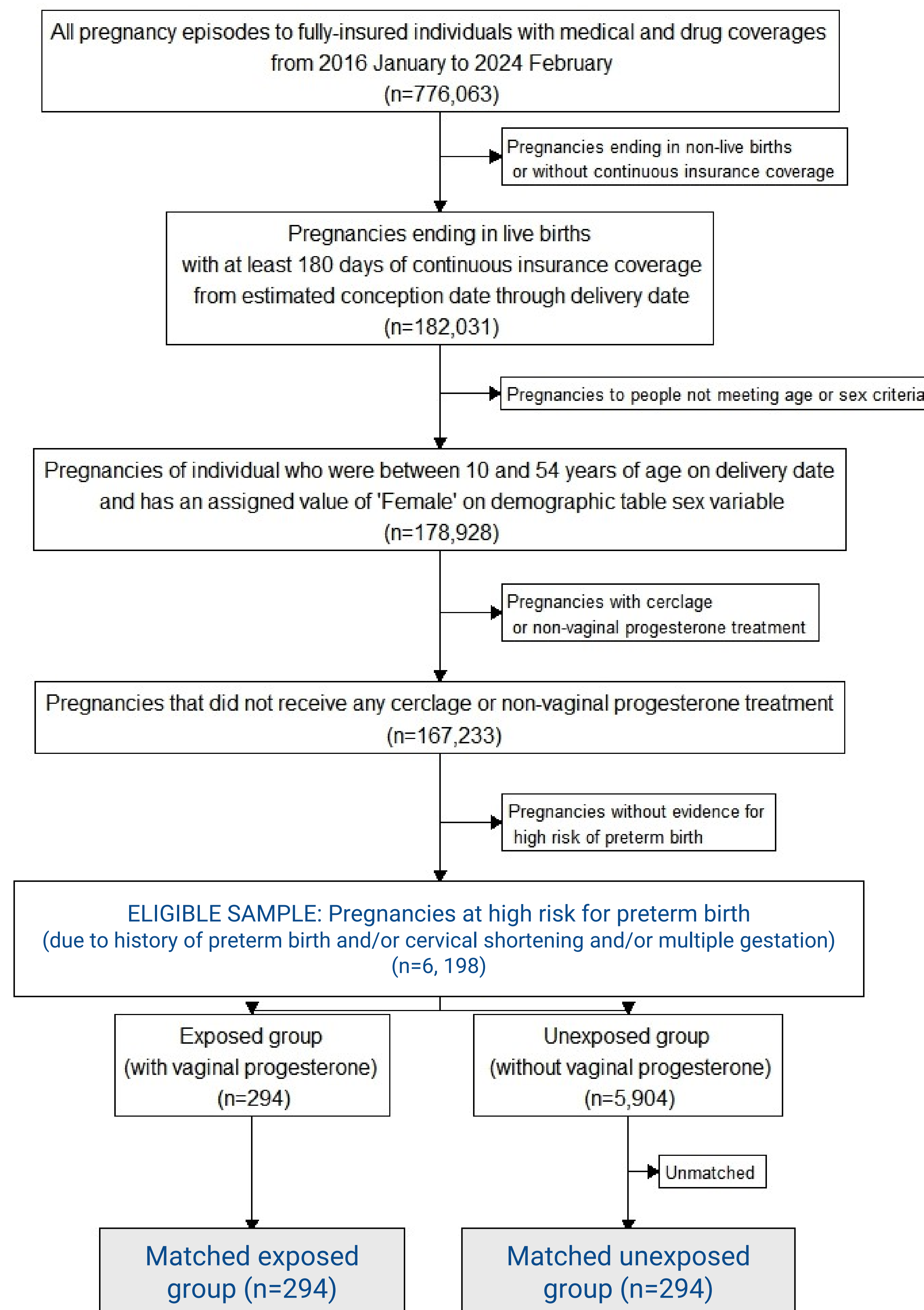
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2. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. "Updated Clinical Guidance for the Use of Progesterone Supplementation for the Prevention of Recurrent Preterm Birth." April 2023. <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2023/04/updated-guidance-use-of-progesterone-supplementation-for-prevention-of-recurrent-preterm-birth>
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METHODS - STUDY SAMPLE

- **Study Sample:** Pregnancies among people who enrolled in non-administrative services only (non-ASO) health insurance plan, had a live birth outcome during 2016-2024, and met all inclusion and exclusion criteria (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1. Sample derivation and matching process



- **Statistical Analyses:** A comparable unexposed group was identified through **propensity score matching (PSM)**.
 - The propensity score model included demographic factors (e.g., age, race/ethnicity) and clinical factors (e.g., cervix shortening, history of preterm labor, multiple gestation, smoking, existing/gestational diabetes or hypertension, and placenta previa).

RESULTS

- **Figure 1:** 6198 pregnancies were at high risk for preterm birth.
 - 294 (4.7%) received vaginal progesterone during pregnancy.
- **Figure 2:** The PSM identified 294 unexposed pregnancies that had similar covariates distributions as the exposed pregnancies.
- **Table 1:** The rate of preterm birth was 33.7% in the exposed group and 30.3% in the matched unexposed group, resulting in a **risk difference of 3.4% (95% CI, -4.1% to 10.9%)**.
 - The **subgroup analyses** restricted to **singleton** pregnancies with either short cervix or history of preterm birth. Vaginal progesterone use was not associated with reduced risk for preterm birth within these subgroups.

Figure 2. Covariates balance between exposed and unexposed groups before and after propensity score matching

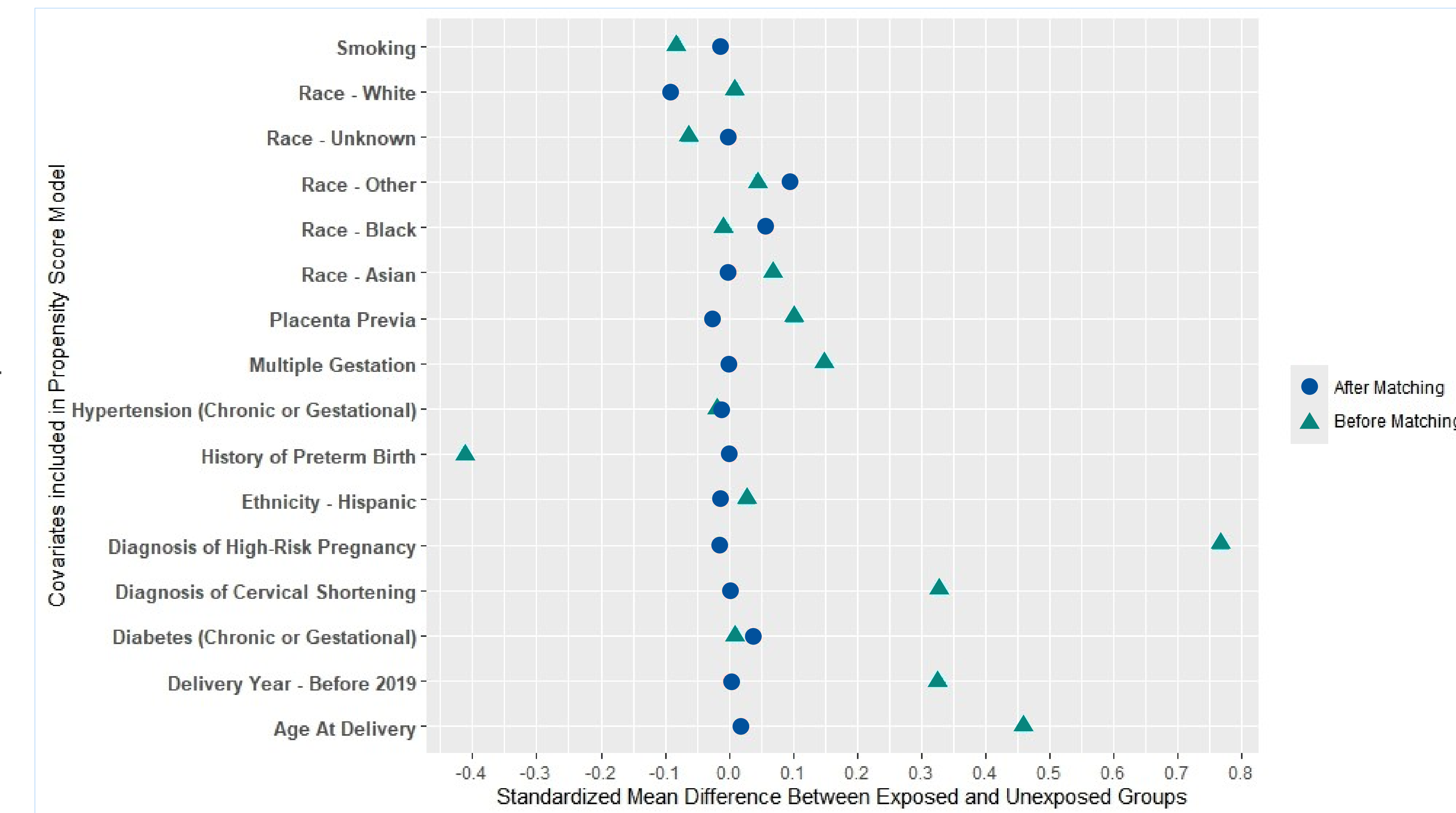


Table 1. Outcome rates and risk difference between exposed and comparison groups

	Number of matched pairs	Rate of preterm birth in the matched unexposed group	Rate of preterm birth in the matched exposed group	Risk Difference (Exposed – Unexposed) (95% CI)
Full Sample	294	33.7%	30.3%	-3.4% (-10.9%, 4.1%)
Subgroup Analyses:				
Singleton pregnancies with short cervix	95	15.8%	22.1%	6.3% (-4.8%, 17.4%)
Singleton pregnancies with history of preterm birth	46	17.4%	28.3%	10.9% (-6.1%, 27.9%)

CONCLUSION

- In a sample of commercially insured pregnancies that were at high risk for preterm birth, there was no evidence of an association between vaginal progesterone use and risk of preterm birth.

CONTACT

Xi (pronounced “she”) Wang, PhD

- Lead Epidemiologist
- CVS Healthspire™ Life Sciences Solutions
- xi.wang@cvshealth.com

